

Of Doves and Traditions

The parent-child experience — hunting and growing together



He hopes his kids, and then their kids, have the same memories of time spent with parents, and he wants them to recognize food when they see it outside of a grocery aisle.

Young Krista, now in her mid-20s and in college, still knows why the traditional, family activities she learned with her father are important, and she continues to take to the field today — only now she hunts with boyfriends from school — some growing-up traditions are harder on dads than others.

Teaching Ben

Indiana conservation officer Dean Shadley of Rushville takes to the field

► Page 3 **DOVES**

Tom and Krista Frysinger (1994)

Teaching Krista

Tom Frysinger and his 16-year-old daughter Krista crouched on bended knees in a hot, dusty weed field at Huntington Reservoir, watching and waiting for mourning doves to fly over.

Between birds, they scanned the sky and watched the clouds and the dry, breezy treeline. The father quizzed his daughter on various gun safety points as they whispered jokes. Tom chuckled as Krista jokingly told him about field lipstick application techniques. They were learning about hunting and each other.

That was six years ago and Tom, who lives in Roanoke and works for IBM, was teaching his daughter what his father had taught him. "My father and I hunted together. Back then, we hunted because we were hungry, to put food on the table, but it also brought my father and me together," said Frysinger.

Topics this issue. . .

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Director of Fish & Wildlife

Start a conversation with an Indiana hunter and you are likely to hear some concern about finding land to hunt. Talk to an Indiana landowner and you are likely to hear concern about hunters on their land. The fact is that most Indiana landowners do allow

hunting on their land, but Indiana landowners have legitimate concerns. When they think about allowing people on their land to hunt or fish, they are concerned about damage to their property and the possibility of being held responsible for accidents that happen on their land.

Just last year, the Indiana legislature addressed the issue of landowner liability. The recreational access statute was amended to provide greater protection to Indiana's private landowners. Those hunters who are allowed to hunt on private land, as long as they are not

paying for that privilege, take upon themselves the responsibility for their own safety.

For most of Indiana's licensed hunters, the concern landowners have for their property is unwarranted. But take a drive down any of Indiana's rural roads and it is likely that you will find a reminder that not all shooting enthusiasts select their targets responsibly. Is it unfair to label this behavior as that of the hunter? Yes, it probably is unfair. But given some of these all too visible reminders, landowners' concerns are certainly reasonable.

We hope that landowners will look upon the hunter as an integral member of their land management team. In order to safeguard the privilege to hunt, we hope Indiana's hunters will look upon landowners with a renewed sense of responsibility and appreciation. Our most visible spokesperson for fish and wildlife, the person who most readily shapes the opinion of our landowners and that of the public, is the one you'll see this fall wearing hunter orange in the field.

Gary Doxtater

DFW Director

If you have plans to hunt private lands, you probably started early this year. If you didn't know the

owner of the land that you are going to hunt, you probably introduced yourself months ago. Maybe you have already made yourself available to pick up what other less responsible visitors left behind, or you have made some other gesture of good will and concern.

Landowners tend to allow hunters on their land that they know and trust. It is up to us, those of us wearing the hunter orange, to demonstrate that we are worthy of that trust. Good landowner relations is the first and best way to ensure that you and I will have a good hunt and good hunting in the years to come.

Our most visible spokesperson for fish and wildlife, the person who most readily shapes the opinion of our landowners and that of the public, is the one you'll see this fall wearing hunter orange in the field.

Division Mission

FISH&WILDLIFE

"To manage fish and wildlife for present and future

generations, balancing ecological, recreational and economic benefits."

Focus on Fish & Wildlife is a quarterly publication from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife. Focus on Fish & Wildlife seeks to educate sportsmen and women, conservationists, wildlife recreationists and all Hoosiers on topics related to the management of Indiana's fish and wildlife resources.

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several times each season to teach 17-year-old son Ben about shooting sports and harvesting doves, which are among the most numerous of game birds in the world.

As a law enforcement officer, Shadley also teaches Ben about proper gun usage, and in understanding and caring for doves.

Years in the field setting up dove decoys and studying the wind and the late-summer sun provides knowledge for future generations of Shadleys and Frysingers.

Ancient native Americans also knew these things and taught them to their children and grandchildren. Traditions were refined over millions of evenings spent at the watering holes and weedy streamsides of America.

Ancient Synergism

People and doves have been living together a long time. A Texan coprolite (fossilized human feces) from 7000 B.C. contains pieces of mourning dove bones.

European settlers wrote of native American cleverness in hunting doves and other birds using nets, spears, arrows, atlatls, sticks, stones, bait, traps, smoke, bolas and snares.

Hunger is the most primordial drive. Everything that lives eats, and food-gathering traditions formed in early families around this need to eat.

Sociologists say this collective social memory is what first differentiated people from other animals. Every individual in a population no longer needed to relearn when the game migrated, how to ready the fishing nets or where to plant crops. Successful families, and then clans, tribes and nations, built, polished and passed on these traditions.

These rituals and traditions still help regulate our lives, but social scientists say divisions of labor in modern societies give us the choice between growing or hunting our own food, or having someone else find our food for us.



Tom and Krista Frysinger cook dove kabobs with friends Sam and Carly Purvis. Krista attends IU and still hunts with friends between classes (1999).

Modern Resource

Today, the mourning dove (Zenaida macroura) is one of the best-known wild birds in Indiana. The plaintive call and whistling wings are familiar sounds in both rural and urban areas. Many Indian legends say this hopeful cooing brings rain.

This foot-long native relative to the introduced pigeon can commonly be seen feeding along roadsides, perched on utility lines, or flying erratically across fields.

While people have hunted mourning doves for thousand of years, humans have also helped these sleek grayish birds. These birds like open woodland and avoid solid forests or open prairie. The forest clearings maintained and burned by native Americans created ideal mourning dove habitat.

Their numbers increased again as the pioneers cleared and farmed the forests and plains. Waste grain greatly supplemented their weed seed diet.

Recent dollars from hunting licenses and taxes on hunting equipment have also funded population studies, habitat enhancement and land acquisition. The mourning dove is now abundant year-round in most of the state.

Prepared by John Maxwell, program director

Bass Fishing at Lake Wawasee

It's not your average fish story

For nearly a century, Lake Wawasee, Indiana's largest natural lake, has been a popular fishing site for largemouth bass. From those early days when summer vacationers first plied its 3,400 acres in wooden rowboats to today's fast-paced anglers in high-speed bass boats, Lake Wawasee has drawn countless numbers of anglers intent on catching bass. Although Preston Miles* may have overstated its reputation, Lake Wawasee is still one of the Hoosier state's best bass fishing lakes. Whether tucked away in a quiet backwater bay or bobbing on windswept waves, bass anglers at Wawasee continue to test their skill at catching Indiana's

Despite its importance as a bass fishing resource, little historical or scientific information on Lake Wawasee's bass population has been recorded over the years. All the while, bass fishing pressure and bass catches have presumably risen. Anglers today spend an estimated 540,000 days fishing for largemouth bass each year at Wawasee and the other 451 natural lakes draped across northern Indiana. Changing trends in bass fishing, especially the growth in bass tournaments, have created user conflicts. How Wawasee's bass population stands up to all the pressure and how conflicts are resolved could hold the key to its reputation in the 21st century.

favorite fish.

To take an in-depth look at current bass fishing opportunities and issues at Lake Wawasee, fisheries biologists from the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife recently conducted an intensive study of the lake. The results shed light on many important aspects of bass biology and will be used to guide future bass management programs. The study also provided an important barometer by which future changes in Wawasee bass fishing will be monitored.

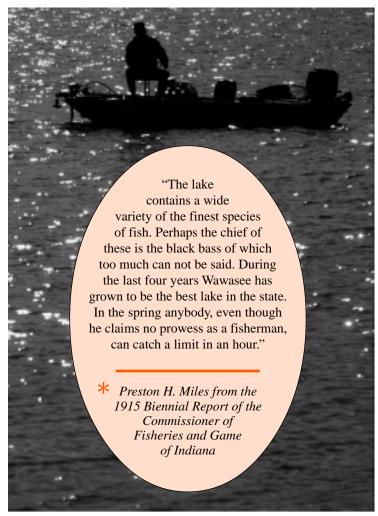
Not surprising, the number one finding of the study is that Lake Wawasee continues to provide better than average bass fishing. Experienced anglers can still catch dozens of bass each day, although the typical rate is one bass for every two

hours of fishing. The catch rate may be less than the rate claimed years ago by Miles, but remains twice as high as the catch rate at most other northern Indiana lakes. As a result of high bass catch rates, two out of every three anglers at Wawasee rate bass fishing as good. The same study showed anglers fish nearly 125,000 hours from April through October at Wawasee and nearby Syracuse Lake. Nearly half of the effort is targeted toward bass.

Biologists also wanted to know the number of bass in the lake. During the study five crews manning electrofishing boats fanned out along Wawasee's shoreline in April and May

to catch, mark and release nearly 4,000 adult bass. Each individual fish was marked by cutting off a portion of one fin, a standard practice that does not hurt the fish. Based on the number of fin-clipped bass later caught by anglers, biologists estimated that Lake Wawasee contains approximately 30,000 bass, eight inches or larger in size. That number translates to nearly 10 bass per acre, a number common within Indiana's largest lakes.

Also not surprising is the size range of bass in the lake. Bass up to 22 inches are present. Slightly more than half are eight to 11 inches long, 25 percent are 12 to 13 inches, 20 percent are 14 to 17 inches, and three percent are 18 inches or larger. Although anglers and biologists would both like to see a higher percentage of larger bass,



the relative scarcity of big bass in Wawasee is not unlike most lakes in the state. The number of intermediate-size bass, however, is slightly higher than normal.

Perhaps most surprising was the observation that Wawasee anglers catch more bass than the lake contains. By counting and interviewing fishermen on the lake and checking their catch, biologists estimated anglers took home 6,700 bass. They caught and released another 32,000 bass. All totaled, the number of bass caught by anglers at Wawasee exceeded the estimate of the total number in the lake by 8,000 fish. How could that be? By practicing catch-and-release fishing, and returning all bass less than the legal size limit, Wawasee anglers are able to recycle thousands of bass to be caught again and again. Without these measures, Wawasee's bass population would be severely reduced.

The catch-and-release philosophy, an outgrowth of tournament fishing, and restrictive minimum size limits have done a lot to protect largemouth bass resources across the state. As bass fishing interest rose in the 1970s and 1980s, anglers and biologists recognized the importance of releasing their catch and limiting the number of bass taken home. Taking some fish home to eat, especially abundant panfish, is fine, but relatively scarce, large, predatory fish need greater protection. Lakes can produce only so many fish. Once those fish are removed, it takes time to replenish the stocks.

Bass tournament anglers at Lake Wawasee have practiced catch-andrelease fishing for years. Improvements in live-well design on bass boats now allow anglers to better handle the fish they catch. At weigh-ins, bass are often placed in large tubs and held in water in plastic bags to reduce fish stress. Once weighed and tabulated, the fish are then released. During checks at Wawasee bass tournaments, biologists noted that fewer than three percent of the fish were not released. Whether you agree or disagree that fishing contests are appropriate, most tournament anglers want to protect bass populations and ensure the



Fisheries biologists Gary Hudson (left) and Jed Pearson demonstrate a fish-tracking receiver to fisherman Jim Bagnoli. The biologists are tracking fish implanted with finger-sized ultrasonic transmitters.

future quality of bass fishing.

Minimum size limits are also designed to protect bass populations. In 1990, a 12-inch size limit went into effect at Wawasee and most other lakes in northern Indiana. In 1998, the size limit was raised to 14 inches. That move alone – raising the limit to 14 inches – placed an additional two-thirds of the bass population under protection from harvest. Biologists say the measure over time could lead to an increase in the number of bigger bass in the lake.

Although most bass are released by anglers, including those caught in tournaments, one troubling aspect emerged from the study. Using tiny electronic transmitters implanted in several bass that allowed biologists to track fish movements, biologists discovered bass caught in one area and released in another are less likely to survive. The problem is compounded when bass are caught in Lake Wawasee and released in nearby Syracuse Lake. In the past, anglers assumed displaced bass would eventually make their way back up a 4,300-foot long channel connecting the two lakes. Not so.

Only one of five bass implanted with transmitters released in Syracuse Lake returned to Wawasee. The rest were either caught before they returned, died within Syracuse Lake, or simply disappeared, perhaps down the outlet of Syracuse Lake. In contrast, three of four radio-tagged bass released within Wawasee remained in the lake over a year until the batteries failed and could no longer be tracked. Biologists speculate bass displaced to Syracuse Lake from Wawasee become disoriented and undergo additional stress, making them less likely to survive.

To address this concern, the Division of Fish and Wildlife encourages all anglers who release bass to do so as soon as possible in the area where they were caught. Also under consideration are improvements to the public access site at Lake Wawasee to accommodate tournament weigh-ins so more bass will be released directly back into Wawasee. One local resident has already developed a fish transport trailer to help tournament anglers haul their fish back.

Lake Wawasee is a healthy lake. Its large expanse of flats, sharp contours, channels and islands provide ideal habitat for largemouth bass and other fish. Given these conditions, coupled with a catch-and-release philosophy and proper bass fishing regulations, there is no reason Lake Wawasee will not remain one of the best bass lakes in the state.

Prepared by Jed Pearson, district fisheries

W.O.W. – Let me say it again, W.O.W.

Magazine brings wildlife into state's largest school system



In a year-long pilot project, The DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife provided *Wild Outdoor World* magazine to Indianapolis Public School fourth graders during the last school year.

Four issues of Indiana-customized W.O.W. were distributed throughout

the school year directly to IPS classrooms along with teacher guides. Surveys conducted near the end of the school year found that W.O.W. was widely used and appreciated in the state's largest school system.

The survey showed 100 percent of IPS teachers used W.O.W. in the classroom.

The analysis also showed:

- 96 percent of teachers believed that W.O.W. increased their students' awareness and knowledge of wildlife, habitat and natural resources issues
- 92 percent of students reported reading some or all of the magazine
- 58 percent of students took the magazine home and shared it with a sibling, parent or grandparent.

Because of the success of the project, the division will again provide magazines to IPS in the coming school year. A handful of conservation groups are also providing the magazine to a few schools around the state. The Division of Fish and Wildlife is urging conservation groups or individuals to sponsor a class, a school, a school system, or a region. Wild Outdoor World magazine is published by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The DNR's Project WILD education program is responsible for the Indiana portion of the magazine.

Call Project WILD, (317) 549-0348 for more information.

Prepared by John Maxwell, program director



New fish and wildlife areas

Great news for sportsmen and women

Chustak State Fishing Area will be open to the public next year

Anglers making plans to trout or salmon fish on Indiana's Lake Michigan tributaries should include the new Chustak State Fishing Area in Porter County on their list of places to fish in 2000.

The Chustak area will provide the first state-owned public fishing opportunities for trout and salmon in the East Branch Little Calumet River system. This stream system, along with Trail Creek in LaPorte County, is stocked annually with trout and salmon. When these anadromous fish return to the streams two to four years after stocking, they provide fishing experiences that anglers will remember for a lifetime.

The site is currently being prepared for public use. It will open next year. Improvements at the 76-acre site include a parking lot, signs, a trail, 29 acres replanted to bottomland hardwood forest, wetland restoration, waterfowl nest boxes and watershed protection for Salt Creek.

The Chustak State Fishing Area was purchased through a resource damage settlement involving the USX Corporation. The area will be managed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. It contains over one mile of fishing access along both banks of the creek.

DNR purchases reclaimed mine land in Pike and Warrick counties

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has completed the purchase of 5,593 acres of reclaimed mineland in Pike and Warrick counties from the Interlake Foundation, formerly the Interlake Steel Company.

The Indiana General Assembly appropriated the \$2.5 million to purchase the property.

The DNR has managed for many years 1,381 acres of the Interlake property, known as Area 5 of the Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area. It will take the DNR several months to mark boundaries and prepare the newly acquired 4,200 acres for public use. In the meantime, the DNR plans to seek recommendations from the public on recreational uses for the newly acquired 4,200 acres.

"The DNR is fortunate to manage several properties that were used only a few years ago to produce the fuel to generate electricity for our homes and businesses. In those areas today, wildlife thrives and trees, prairie grasses and wildflowers flourish. The DNR is very grateful to the members of the Indiana General Assembly who provided the resources needed to acquire this wonderful property for wildlife and recreation," said Larry Macklin, DNR director.



A late fall day at the new Chustak State Fishing Area

Skamania steelhead

Skamania steelhead, a genetic product or an evolutionary revolution?

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a pig, a hog and a swine? Well, it's all in a name. It's the same with Skamania steelhead trout. A Skamania steelhead is not a new species, but a strain of steelhead. It's a close relative to the Michigan steelhead (winter run). They are both relatives of the rainbow trout, which are used in Indiana's inland trout program.

Scientifically, they are all *Oncorhynchus mykiss*. The difference between the three types is their migratory pattern and their place of origin.

The Skamania is a summer migrating steelhead which originated in the Pacific Northwest. There are other strains of summer migrating steelhead as well. Hatchery spawning in Washington occurs December

through April. Migrating adults enter spawning streams during the summer months. Upon entering the tributaries, the adult Skamania move upstream until they reach a barrier or find an area of cool, spring-fed water with appropriate habitat.

Fish will hold in the stream until they are ready to spawn in the winter and early spring. Spawning is dependent on water temperature and day length, and closely mirrors the spawning patterns from the west coast parent stocks.

These fish are extremely unique to the Lake Michigan fishery and provide an excellent near-shore fishery during "slow times," as well as a stream fishery during the summer months. These fish provide nearly a yearround fishery in some tributaries of Lake Michigan.

The Michigan steelhead (winter run) have a slightly different migratory pattern, but also originated in the Pacific Northwest. Michigan steelhead have two separate migratory runs and will spawn in the late winter to early spring.

In the St. Joseph River, the first run enters the lower river in late October and November and, like the Skamania, holds in the river throughout the winter to await spawning time.

The second run, which usually comprises the majority of the Michigan steelhead, enters the river during March and April. These fish move upstream and immediately make spawning beds known as redds on shallow gravel bars in feeder creeks and the main body of the river.

Inland rainbow trout are normally not a factor in the Lake Michigan fishery, but are important in many Indiana cold-water lakes and streams. Indiana's inland trout stock come from Ohio. Rainbows do, at times, exhibit migratory behavior, but they are more interested in finding a nice



Brian Breidert weighs steelhead smolts at the Bodine State Fish Hatchery prior to stocking the small fish in the St. Joseph River



Fishing guide Richard Parker hefts a Skamania steelhead trout boated out of the St. Joseph River in Mishawaka

gravel substrate within their own body of water. Spawning takes place in the spring as well and is again tied to water temperature and day length.

These three races of fish have a lot in common. But the differences that exist make them unique in their own right. Each strain of fish requires Indiana biologists to exercise different management options to maintain the quality of the fisheries.

Most of Indiana's Lake Michigan fishery is based on hatchery support, due to low levels of natural reproduction. To help ensure a quality steelhead fishery, Indiana collects its own Skamania broodstock from the St. Joseph River.

Since the Skamania returns to Indiana waters in the late spring and throughout the summer, broodstock are collected periodically during this entire time period. Because the collections occur at this time of year, there is little concern that Michigan steelhead will mix with the Skamanias.

Existing age class data is used to target fish that are four years of age and older. These fish are trapped in South Bend and held at the Bodine State Fish hatchery for as long as nine months prior to actual egg collection. The Bodine hatchery traps only 700 fish from a summer

steelhead migration that can exceed 15,000 adults.

Indiana collects fish during the entire summer migration. This staggered trapping pattern provides for several short collections over several months, allowing anglers access to tackle busting trophies nearly 12 months of the year.

During the 1999 collection, fish were collected from a minimum of four year classes. These fish were 28 to 34 inches in length with weights averaging 15 pounds. Some fish weighed more than 20 pounds.

It would be extremely easy to collect all broodstock from a one to two week period, but fisheries biologists and geneticists feel this philosophy would jeopardize the future evolution of the Skamania.

Genetics play a big part in the evolution of a species. Indiana recognizes the importance of genetics and has a genetic management plan in place to safeguard against changes to this extremely valuable resource. Additional safeguards are employed during the spawning operation.

Controlled water temperatures cause Indiana's brood stock to spawn in January and February. This time frame is consistent with the original stock at the Skamania Hatchery in Washington.

In nature, not all fish are ready to spawn on the same day. Indiana's program utilizes eggs collected each week during the 6- to 7-week spawning period. The resulting fingerlings used for production are carefully selected from at least five of these weekly collections.

Approximately 50,000 fingerlings from each of these egg collections are used. It would be easy to use only a few males to fertilize a large number of females. However, an effective breeding number of nearly 250 pairs is necessary to maintain this unique strain of steelhead. Annually, over 1.1 million steelhead eggs are collected for in-state and out-of-state use.

The use of sound biological and genetic principles will allow for the continued success of this truly unique strain of steelhead. The Skamania steelhead success story continues to evolve for future generations of Hoosier anglers.

Prepared by Brian Breidert.

Breidert is the former manager of the Bodine State Fish Hatchery. Brian recently relocated to the DNR's Lake Michigan headquarters.

Fish and Wildlife Open-House Meetings

Informal meetings to address deer management and administrative rules

White-tailed deer management and administrative rules will be the primary subjects of 13 open-house meetings scheduled the last week in March. Division of Fish and Wildlife biologists will host the events. Representatives from DNR property management, fisheries and law enforcement will also be on hand to answer questions and address concerns.

The open-house meetings are not typical public meetings. The format is conversational and informal. They are designed to make participants feel comfortable discussing their concerns and asking questions about deer management and administrative rules.

Wildlife managers will consider open-house comments when they set antlerless deer harvest quotas for the 2000-2001 deer hunting season and as they propose new administrative rules.

The DNR will propose antlerless deer bag limits for each county based on research, but the DNR reevaluates those proposals once they have reviewed the input collected at these meetings. A final decision isn't made until the DNR has considered public input from the 13 open-house meetings, reports from district biologists, crop damage reports, deer-

vehicle accident data, as well as the harvest and biological data collected by wildlife managers in the field.

You can get last year's (1998-99) deer harvest summary and the Division of Fish and Wildlife's white-tailed deer strategic plan by calling (812) 334-3795. The information is also on-line at www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm.

This season's (1999-2000) deer harvest summary and bonus county bag limit proposals for the 2000-2001 deer season will be available at the open houses and on the Fish and Wildlife website about a week before the open houses.

There's an open-house meeting near you!

March open-houses meet from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

- District 1 Rick Ward (219) 896-3572 March 29, 2000 Kankakee FWA N. Judson, IN
- District 2 Al Van Hoey
 (219) 347-2945
 March 27, 2000
 Best Western Inn, Bixler Room
 US Hwy 6 East & Fairview Dr.
 Kendallville, IN
- District 3 Bob Porch (219) 285-2704 March 27, 2000 Willow Slough FWA Morocco, IN
- District 4 Tom Hewitt (765) 473-9324 March 28, 2000 Miami County Fairgrounds Jct. 200 N. & Business 31 Peru, IN

- District 5 Pete Meyer (765) 473-9324 March 27, 2000 National Guard Armory 1620 N. Jefferson Hartford City, IN
- District 6 Dean Zimmerman (765) 463-0032 March 28, 2000 Tippecanoe Co. Extension Office 3150 Sagamore Parkway South One-half mile southeast of Tippecanoe Mall on US 52 Lafayette, IN
- District 7 Mark Bennett (765) 349-9239 March 27, 2000 Marion County Public Library -Wayne Branch 198 S. Girls School Road Indianapolis, IN

- District 8 John Russell (765) 529-6319 March 28, 2000 Wilbur Wright FWA 2239 N. SR 103 New Castle, IN
- District 9 Roger Stonebraker (812) 268-0300 March 29, 2000 Holiday Inn Terre Haute, IN
- District 10 Bob Montgomery (812) 644-7382 March 28, 2000 Glendale FWA Montgomery, IN
- District 11 Dan McGuckin (812) 334-1137 March 28 2000 Spring Mill State Park Inn Elm Room Mitchell, IN

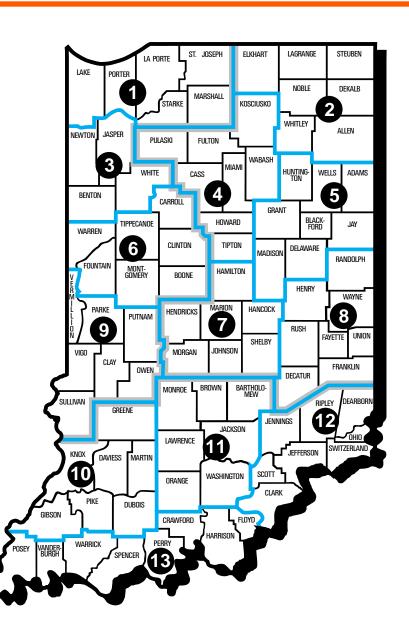
Individuals who need reasonable modifications to participate in any of the public meetings, should contact Kim Dwigans, Division of Fish and Wildlife ADA coordinator at (317) 232-4186, or TDD at (317) 232-4080. A 72-hour advance notice is requested.

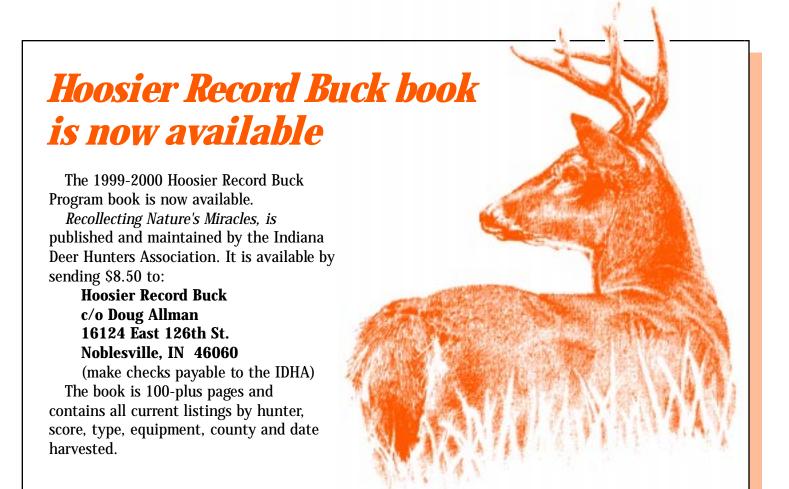
Written comments about deer management or administrative rule changes can be sent to Input, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 W. Washington St., Room W273, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Written comments must be received by April 7, 2000 for consideration.

Prepared by Michael Ellis, Fish and Wildlife

- District 12 Ed Guljas
 (812) 346-6888
 March 29, 2000
 Southeastern Career Center
 Room A105
 On Highway 50 just west of town
 Versailles, IN
- District 13 Jeff Thompson (812) 789-2724 March 29, 2000 Vanderburgh 4H center Highway 41 North Evansville, IN

- Propose changes or additions to administrative rules
- Ask questions and comment on proposals for 2000-2001 bonus county deer quotas





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